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DRYING FOODS for Victory Meals



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INTENSIVE RESEARCH on home drying is under way. This bulletin does not attempt to give all the answers. It brings together the most satisfactory information to date on methods of drying several fruits and vegetables widely grown throughout the United States. For advice on how to dry products limited to certain regions, consult your State agricultural college, county home demonstration agent, or local people experienced in home drying.

DRYING FOODS FOR VICTORY MEALS

VICTORY GARDENS lead directly to victory meals—all the year round—for those who take thought for the morrow and put by a store of fruits and vegetables.

Part of the food from orchard and garden will be canned or pickled, or made into preserves, jam, or jelly. Some foods will go into freezer lockers. Some—such as potatoes, turnips, carrots, parsnips, and late-maturing cabbage—can readily be stored in cellars or outdoor pits and should be taken care of in this way rather than by drying. Other foods, too perishable for storing, will need to be dried at home with simple equipment.

IMPORTANT IN WARTIME

Home drying is especially important in wartime because it does not require sugar—nor the metals, rubber, and other materials used in more common types of food preservation. Drying is not a difficult job. However, it does take time—and constant attention—especially at the beginning and the end of the process.

Directions for drying several kinds of fruits and vegetables are given in the section beginning on page 10. Timetables are not given as drying time varies greatly—depending on the kind of food, the size of the pieces, the type of drier, and the weather.

For fruits, drying time in a home-made drier varies from about 6 to 24 hours. For vegetables, from about 3 to 15 hours. Sun-drying takes much longer. Dried products weigh from one-third to one-twelfth as much as the fresh material.

Whatever the method of drying, by sunshine or controlled heat, “speed is the word”—both when preparing the fresh food and when getting it into the drier. The faster you work, from garden to drier, the higher will be the vitamin value of the dried food and the better the flavor and cooking quality. Once started drying should be kept going until enough water is removed to keep the food from spoiling.

WHAT TO DRY

Fruits are easier to dry than most vegetables. Those commonly dried at home are apples, apricots, figs, peaches, and pears. Among other fruits that may be satisfactorily dried are blackberries, dew-

berries, loganberries, black raspberries, red raspberries, cherries, nectarines, plums, and prunes.

Vegetables ordinarily dried are sweet corn, shelled mature beans and peas, and okra. Other vegetables added to the list during recent years include beets, leafy green vegetables, green peas, snap beans, peppers, pimientos, pumpkins, and squash. Sweetpotatoes should be dried only in those parts of the country where they cannot be stored. They dry best in a heated drier with a forced draft. (See fig. 3, p. 8.)

Such leafy green vegetables as beet tops, dandelion greens, kale, mustard greens, and turnip greens are at their best when fresh. They should be dried only in regions where winter gardens are not feasible. Herbs, including celery leaves and parsley, are easily dried in the air.

PREPARATION FOR DRYING

Dry only fresh, ripe, sound, clean foods—those at the right stage for table use. Handle carefully to prevent bruising. One decayed slice of apple or one moldy bean may give a bad flavor to an entire lot.

To prevent discoloration, pare all foods with stainless-steel knives. Cut food into thin, even slices or uniform pieces, on a wooden board.

As soon as fruits and vegetables are cut open and exposed to the air, certain changes begin to take place in food value, color, flavor, and odor. To control these changes, foods prepared for drying are usually given special treatment. They may be dipped in an acid or salt solution, sulfured, or precooked in steam or boiling water. Work fast through this step.

Special Treatment for Fruits

To help hold the color and prevent darkening, most fruits should be sulfured, steamed, or dipped in salt water. Apples may be treated in any one of these three ways.

Sulfuring is a good treatment for many fruits. Properly used, it is not harmful. It protects certain vitamins during drying and preserves natural fruit color and flavor. It also prevents souring and insect attacks during drying. Products to be sulfured should be placed on wooden trays—sulfur fumes will corrode galvanized screen trays.

To sulfur fruit.—Work out of doors. For small amounts of fruit the sulfuring chamber may be simply a tight packing box or a wooden frame covered closely with roofing paper or wallboard. It should be high enough to cover a stack of trays and wide enough to allow about a foot of extra room for the sulfur pan. At the bottom of the sulfuring box allow a small space for air to enter—otherwise the sulfur may not burn.

Two blocks of wood laid on the ground will form a support for the loaded trays. Stack the trays one upon the other, with pieces of light lath between. The lowest tray should be 6 to 8 inches from the ground.

Measure out 1 level teaspoon of sulfur for each pound of prepared fruit. (Don't use too much sulfur.) Wrap the sulfur in a small piece of paper and place in a shallow tin can. Set the can of sulfur on the ground in front of the loaded trays. Light the paper, and quickly place the sulfuring chamber over trays and can. It should cover the trays completely to prevent loss of sulfur fumes. For length of time to sulfur each kind of fruit, see detailed directions (pp. 10-12).

If fruit is not sulfured.—Although such fruits as apples, apricots, and peaches are usually sulfured, they can be dried without sulfur treatment. If they are not sulfured they should be steamed before drying. (Apples may be dipped in salt water.) To retain the juices, pitted fruits should be dried stone side up, on wooden trays.

Special Treatment for Vegetables

Before drying, vegetables should be precooked in steam or boiling water. Recent experiments indicate that as a rule vegetables precooked in steam are higher in food value than those precooked in boiling water. They also keep better, require less soaking before they are cooked for the table, and have better flavor and appearance.

However, precooking in boiling water is quite satisfactory if directions are carefully followed. Work with small amounts of food at a time so that the water will not be cooled more than necessary. To conserve vitamins and minerals, hold the vegetables in the boiling water the shortest time necessary to cook them almost tender—and use the same water for several lots of food.

EQUIPMENT FOR STEAMING

A steam-pressure canner is ideal equipment for steaming. Put a small amount of water in the container and heat to a rapid boil. Place a thin layer of prepared food in a wire basket or colander, and set the basket on a rack above the level of the boiling water. Cover the cooker, leaving the pet cock open, and keep the water boiling briskly for the time recommended in directions for each product.

Steamers are also excellent equipment for precooking. Put a thin layer of food in the top compartment and place over rapidly boiling water.

In Wartime Use What You Have

If you lack special equipment for steaming, use a large kettle or any other deep container with a tight-fitting cover. An ordinary wash boiler or large lard can may be fitted with a wire basket for the food and a rack to hold the basket above the level of the boiling water.

Start the water heating in plenty of time so that it will be boiling briskly as soon as the food is ready for steaming.

Place the prepared material in the wire basket. Steam until all the pieces are heated through to the center. They should be almost done. (There is more danger of undercooking than of overcooking.) Stir occasionally, and, when the food is sufficiently steamed, spread the pieces on trays and place in the drier immediately.

METHODS OF DRYING

Successful drying depends on three things: Dryness of the air, temperature of the air, and circulation of the air.

Sun-Drying

In regions with clear, dry, practically rainless periods several kinds of fruit and a few kinds of vegetables may be sun-dried on an outdoor shelf, a roof sloping toward the south, or on racks in sunny windows.

Good fruits for sun-drying are apples, apricots, blackberries, raspberries, cherries, peaches, and plums. Fortunately most of these ripen at a time of year when the weather is favorable for outdoor drying.

The most satisfactory vegetable for sun-drying is early-maturing sweet corn. However, vegetables dried with controlled heat have a more pleasing flavor than those that are sun-dried—and this applies even to sweet corn.

Small lots of food may be spread out on clean boards, canvas, heavy wrapping paper, cheesecloth, or clean flour sacks or feed sacks held in place by laths. Wire trays, window screens, or slat trays covered with thin cloth are even better, as they allow the air to circulate under as well as over the food. Stir two or three times daily. Take the food in at night and at the approach of showers.

Trays are desirable for drying large amounts of material. These should be of uniform size so they can be easily and quickly stacked.

To keep out insects, cover drying products with cheesecloth, mosquito netting, or wire window screening.

Drying With Controlled Heat

Drying in heated driers with controlled or artificial heat has several advantages over sun-drying. It goes on continuously—even after sundown—and in rainy as well as sunny weather. It reduces drying time and extends the drying season into the fall, when late varieties of certain fruits and vegetables are maturing.

Vegetables should be dried by controlled heat rather than sunshine in order to protect food value, color, and flavor. A possible exception to this rule is sweet corn maturing early in the hottest weather of the season.

Home-made Heated Driers

Swinging or bird-cage drier.—The simplest of the three heated driers illustrated is the swinging, or bird-cage, drier shown in figure 1. It is convenient for drying small amounts of food and may be used above an ordinary cook stove. The frame should be covered with thin cloth, to protect the food from dust.

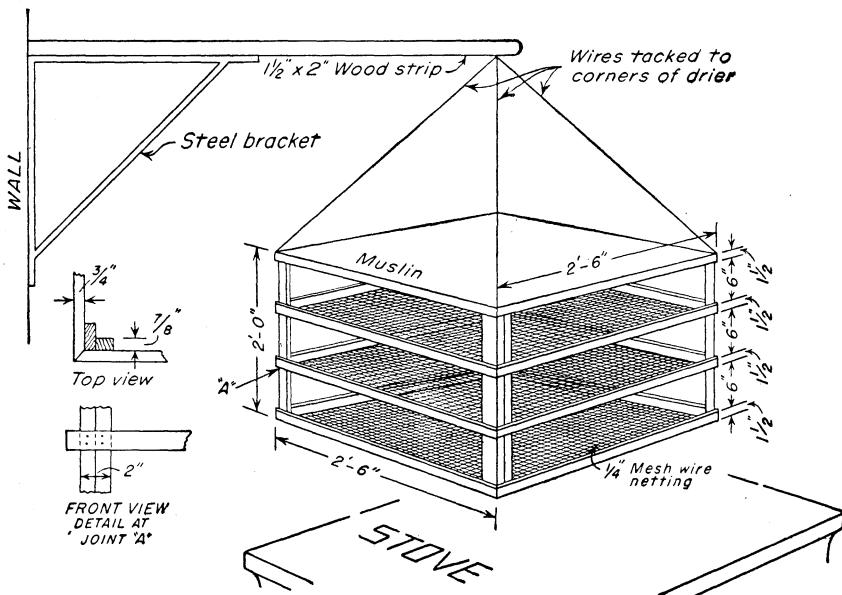


FIGURE 1. Swinging or bird-cage drier.

Cabinet drier is widely used.—One of the most widely used home-made driers is the cabinet type, shown in figure 2. To provide an air channel, the trays are adjusted so that the top tray touches the door of the cabinet, the second tray the rear wall, the third the door. The remaining trays alternate in similar fashion. Any number of trays from one to seven may be used, provided that the top tray and every alternate tray touch the door.

Heat the drier for 20 to 30 minutes before putting in the trays. Place thermometer on bottom tray. Check the temperature at the end of the first half hour, and if necessary adjust the heat according to the directions recommended for the particular food being dried. Shift the trays every hour—moving the bottom tray to the top and dropping each of the others to the place just below.

Building the cabinet drier.—Construct the drier from inside measurements, as thickness of posts and boards causes variation in outside measurements.

SIDES.—Build two frames, preferably of 2- by 2-inch material, 30 inches wide and 62 inches high over all, with one brace of same ma-

terial flush with top of the 62-inch uprights; one brace of same material 36 inches from top and one brace of 1- by 2-inch material, 10 inches from bottom. On these frames nail boards to a depth of 36 inches, preferably using $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch material, any width, or various widths.

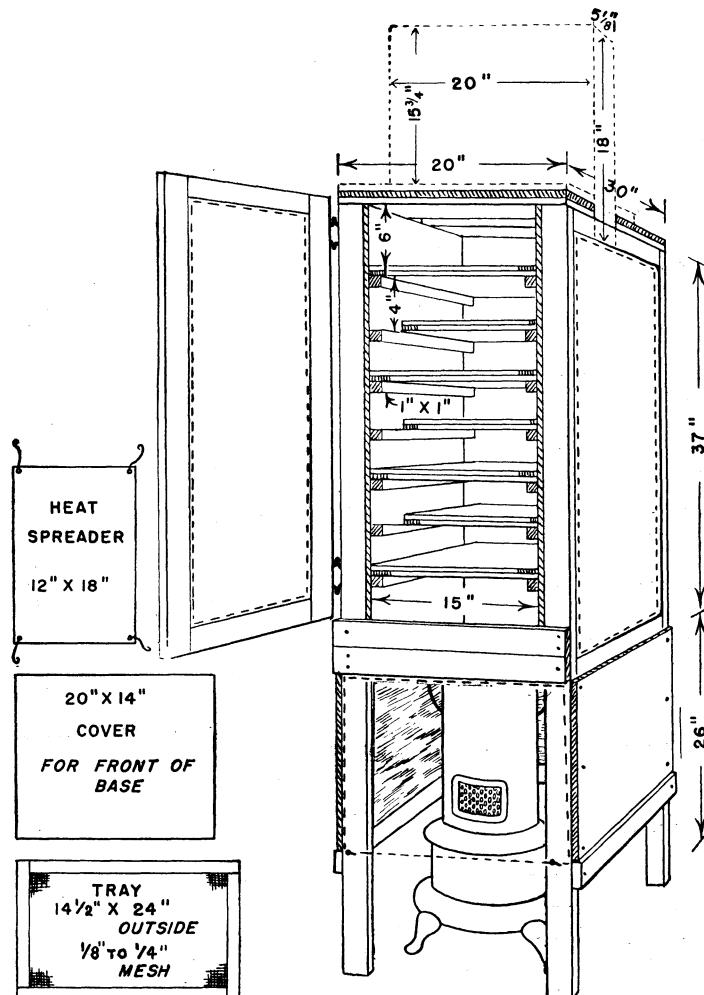


FIGURE 2.—Cabinet drier. (Adapted from The Home Evaporator, College of Agriculture, University of California, Berkeley.)

TRAY RUNWAYS.—To the wall thus formed, nail one tray runway 1 by 1 by 30 inches, 6 inches from the top. Place the remaining six runways 4 inches apart, measuring from the top of one runway to the top of the next. Place the two sides of the evaporator in a vertical position and insert two measuring sticks 15 inches long, one on the upper runway; one on the lower runway between the sides. Measure the width of the evaporator over all. Cut lumber accordingly for

rear wall and top. Nail one 3-inch piece on top at door end. Allow a 3-inch opening (ventilator) as shown in figure, for escape of moist air. Cover the remainder of the top.

MATERIALS NEEDED TO BUILD CABINET DRIER

Lumber for—

Posts and braces:

3 pieces, 2" x 2" x 10"

Door frames and braces:

2 pieces, 1" x 2" x 9"

Sides, tops, back, and door:

6 pieces, ½" x 6" x 10"

1 piece, ½" x 3" x 2"

Runways:

3½ pieces, 1" x 1" x 10"

Tray frames:

12 pieces, ½" x 1" x 8" (or
25 laths)

Chimney:

2 pieces, 15¾" x 20" x ¼"

2 pieces, 18" x 4½" x ¼"
plywood

2 pieces, 19½" x 2½" x 1"
lumber

½" quarter-round 63"

Insulating material for—

Door:

1 piece, 28½" x 15½"

Back:

1 piece, 36¾" x 19½"

Sides:

2 pieces, 32½" x 26"

Top:

1 piece, 3" x 19½".

1 piece, 24¼" x 19½"

Fireproof material for apron—

Back:

1 piece, 14" x 19½"

Front:

1 piece, 14" x 20"

Sides:

2 pieces, 14" x 29½"

Hardware—

Galvanized wire screen for trays:

½" or ¼" mesh, sufficient to
cut 7 pieces 14½" x 24"
(24", 30", and 48" widths
cut without waste)

Heat spreader:

1 piece of sheet iron, 12" x
18"

1 small hook-style door clasp

2 hinges, 2¼" or 2½" size

Wire:

4 pieces, 8" long (small size
copper or black iron wire, or
broom wire)

Nails:

½-lb. 2-penny nails, for trays
1 lb. additional nails, 3 sizes,
suitable for lumber to be
used

1 medium-size coal-oil heater

REAR WALL.—Cover rear wall to a depth of 36 inches and nail a brace of 1- by 2-inch material, 10 inches from bottom (fig. 2).

DOOR.—Nail 1- by 2-inch brace to frame, even with lower edge of side wall. Build door to fit evaporator (fig. 2).

INSULATION.—Fit into the sides, top, back, and door around the actual drying chamber pieces of ½-inch celotex or other insulation of similar thickness. Fasten them in place with brads or nails. Be sure the entire inside surface of the door is flush with the front of the drier.

CHIMNEY.—Attach each of the 1-inch wood pieces at right angles to one of the large plywood pieces, across the 20-inch side at the bottom end. Turn so the L's face outward with the inside walls parallel and fit the 4½-inch pieces between the L-shaped pieces, tops even. Nail in place to form an oblong box 20 by 5½ by 15¾ inches,

open at the top and bottom, and with the narrow ends extending $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches below the sides. Nail one strip of $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch quarter-round into each inside corner to make the chimney stable. This chimney slips on over the vent in the top of the drier. It may be removed when the drier is stored.

APRON.—Enclose the space between the lower braces and the upper insulated walls with one layer of material of the dimensions



FIGURE 3. Tunnel drier.

given, to protect the heater from drafts and direct the heat upward. This material should be fireproof. Do not nail the front piece in place; it must be removable in order to allow for placing the heater.

TRAYS.—Cut seven pieces of galvanized-wire screen mesh $14\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide and 24 inches long. Cut 28 pieces of lumber $\frac{1}{2}$ by 1 by 23 inches, and 28 pieces of lumber $\frac{1}{2}$ by 1 by $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches for tray frames. Place two pieces of each length together to measure $14\frac{1}{2}$ by 24 inches

over all. Place wire screen on these strips and place four similar strips over the netting in position to make corners of tray firm. Nail firmly together.

HEAT SPREADER.—On each side on the inside of evaporator, 6 inches from corners and 3 inches above the lower edge, insert a screw eye or small nail from which to suspend, by pieces of wire, the heat spreader (fig. 2). Adjust the heat spreader over the oil stove, allowing a 2-inch space between the two for circulation of air.

Tunnel drier.—In a tunnel drier (fig. 3) the drying compartment is a long rectangular box, raised at the back. The trays—on slides parallel to the top of the box—are placed to form a channel in the front, through which the heated air enters. An opening in the top surface of the tunnel at the rear allows the air to escape. The heat flows up at the front, and back over the inclined trays—escaping from the vented opening in the rear.

Temperature and Thermometers

In general, the best temperatures for drying are between 125° and 160° F., although for some vegetables the temperature should never exceed 150°. Increase the temperature in the middle stages of drying and decrease toward the end. If the temperature is too low to begin with, the food may sour; if it is too high, the water-filled cells of fruits and vegetables may expand and burst. Or the products may harden on the surface, thus making it more difficult for moisture to be removed from the inside of the food.

When the drying products have lost considerable moisture, increase the temperature. Reduce it again toward the end of the process. Otherwise the food may scorch—or caramelize, if it contains a great deal of sugar.

A thermometer is a help in regulating the temperature of a heated drier, but when thermometers are not available old-fashioned rules of thumb still hold good. Learn to tell by the feel of the material on the trays whether it is drying satisfactorily. It should be moist to the touch and cooler than the air flowing over it. If the food is practically at air temperature and not moist to the touch, it is drying too fast.

Test for Dryness

Fruits are ready to remove from the drier when they are tough and leathery. Vegetables should be rigid and brittle. If in doubt as to whether material is dry enough, leave it in the drier a little longer, but reduce the temperature. As long as the temperature is held low enough, there is not much danger of food becoming too dry.

Proper condition for storing.—Even though they pass the test for dryness, fruits and vegetables taken from the drying trays are not

uniformly dry, and pieces that are too moist may cause mold to develop. Sort food carefully, and return to the drier any pieces that show signs of moisture.

As a final precaution against insects, just before storing return all foods to the drier and reheat for 10 to 15 minutes at a temperature from 165° to 180° F.

KEEP DRIED FOODS DRY

Dried fruits and vegetables will keep for a year or longer if sealed in moistureproof containers and stored in a cool, dark, dry place. Examine the food occasionally. If there is any sign of moisture reheat to 165° F. and reseal.

Practical containers include glass jars, tin cans, and tin boxes, with tight-fitting lids, and stone crocks with covers that can be sealed. If you have glass jars but no rubber rings, or jars that are not perfect around the top, they can be sealed with a strip of muslin dipped in hot paraffin and placed over the opening. Screw-top jars may be sealed with used rubber rings that have not become hard and brittle. Use two rings instead of one and screw the top down very tightly.

Other containers that prove satisfactory in a *dry* storeroom are heavy paper and cloth bags that have been dipped in melted paraffin.

Store in small amounts.—Fill containers as full as possible. As dried foods are best if used a short time after opening, it is well to store them in small amounts. A number of small bags may be filled, labeled, and placed in a lard can or stone crock. The large container should of course be sealed.

PREPARATION FOR TABLE USE

Cover dried foods with cold water and soak for $\frac{1}{2}$ to 6 hours, adding more water if necessary. Cook until just tender in the same water in which soaked. Most of the liquid will be absorbed during cooking.

Dried vegetables have already been precooked and therefore can be cooked for the table in a very short time. Before cooking, soak just long enough to plumpen. Dried greens do not require soaking. Cook until tender in boiling salted water to cover.

HOW TO DRY FRUITS

Apples.—Select late varieties of good dessert or cooking quality. Fruit should be mature but not soft. Wash, pare, and core. Remove blemishes. Cut into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch slices or rings, or into quarters or eighths. Before drying, fruit should be sulfured, or steamed 5 to 7 minutes, or held in salt solution 10 minutes (4 teaspoons salt per gallon of water).

To sulfur, spread cut fruit on wooden or slat-bottom trays, 1 to

$1\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep. (See p. 2.) Apples cut in slices or eighths should be sulfured 20 to 30 minutes; if cut in quarters, 45 to 60 minutes. Place in drier at 130° F. and gradually increase temperature to 165° . Finish drying at 145° to 150° . For sun-drying, spread fruit in thin layers not more than two slices deep.

Apricots.—Select tree-ripened fruit. Do not peel. Cut in halves and remove stones. Sulfur $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 hours, or steam 5 to 7 minutes (p. 3). Spread on wooden trays in single layers, stone side up. Start drying at 130° to 145° F. and gradually increase temperature to 155° .

Berries—blackberries, dewberries, loganberries, black raspberries, red raspberries.—Pick in early morning. Select only ripe but firm fruit. Spread in thin layers—softer fruit not more than two berries deep. Use wooden trays or screen trays covered with cloth. The cloth keeps the berries from sticking.

Get trays into drier as quickly as possible. Start drying at 135° to 145° F. (Start dewberries, loganberries, and red raspberries at 130° .) Gradually increase temperature to 150° and 155° when fruit is two-thirds to three-fourths dry, decreasing temperature toward end of drying process. Berries are sufficiently dry when they rattle on the trays and no longer show moisture when crushed between the fingers. For sun-drying, spread in single layers.

Cherries—Tartarian, Bing, Lambert, Dikeman, and sour or pie.—Pick in early morning. Select fruit that is just ripe. Wash, remove stems and imperfect cherries. Pit the fruit, and drain for about 1 hour. The juice may be bottled. Spread fruit on trays in single layers, place in drier, and start drying at 120° . The temperature should never be over 150° .

Figs—Adriatic, Mission, Smyrna, Celeste, Turkey, Magnolia, Brunswick, Black Ischia.—Hand-pick when well-ripened but firm. Remove stems. To soften skins, dip figs for 1 minute in steam or boiling water. Cut in halves lengthwise. Spread on trays in single layers. Place in drier at 115° to 120° F. When fruit is noticeably shriveled the temperature may be increased to 140° to 145° . Stir at intervals to keep fruit from sticking to trays.

Nectarines.—Directions same as for apricots.

Peaches.—Select any good table variety. The fruit should be ripe enough for eating but not dead ripe. Wash, and peel by steaming or by holding in boiling water 1 to 2 minutes.

Peaches for drying may also be lye-peeled, in a solution containing $\frac{1}{4}$ pound (4 ounces, or about 4 level tablespoons) of granulated lye of a standard brand to 2 gallons of water. Use an agateware or iron kettle, never aluminum. Heat solution to boiling, and while it is actively boiling immerse the peaches, in a wire basket, until skins are loosened and partially dissolved. This usually takes 30 to 60

seconds. Remove the fruit and wash it immediately—in running water if possible—until skins and lye are removed. Then rinse thoroughly—otherwise the peaches may turn brown. A 2-minute dip in cold water containing 2 tablespoons each of salt and vinegar per gallon of water helps to prevent browning. If a thermometer is used, peaches may be peeled in a stronger lye solution at a lower temperature—1 pound of lye to 1½ gallons of water, heated to 135° to 140° F. (never higher). Freestone peaches are usually lye-peeled after they are halved and the pits are removed.

For drying, remove pits, and place fruit in single layers on trays, pit side up. If peaches are very large, cut in quarters or slices. Sulfur 1 to 2 hours, or steam 5 to 7 minutes. Start drying at 125° to 130° F., gradually increase to 175° and lower again to 150° toward end of drying.

Pears—Bartlett, Kieffer.—Wash, pare, and core. Remove blemishes. Cut into ¼-inch slices or rings, or into quarters or eighths. Sulfur 3 to 4 hours, or steam 5 to 7 minutes. (If there is any delay between the preparation of the fruit and the steaming process, hold prepared fruit in salt solution—4 teaspoons salt per gallon of water.) Place in drier at 130° F., and gradually increase the temperature to 150°. Dry in single layers.

Plums—Abundance, Burbank, Clifford, Hunt.—Wash, cut in halves, and stone. Place on trays in single layers, stone side up. Sulfur 20 to 25 minutes. Place in drier at 130° F. and gradually increase to 165°.

Prunes.—These are varieties of plums often dried with the pit in. To soften skins, hold in steam or boiling water 2 minutes. Or cut the prunes in halves, remove pits, and spread fruit on trays in single layers, pit side up. Start drying at 130° F. and gradually increase to 165°.

HOW TO DRY VEGETABLES

Beans—lima and other fresh shell beans.—Gather when just ready for table use. Shell. Steam 8 minutes, or hold in boiling water 5 minutes. Drain. Spread on trays, ½ to ¾ inch deep. Start drying at 115° to 120° F., allowing temperature to rise to 140°. Stir frequently at beginning of drying process.

Beans, snap.—Wash, cut off ends or remove strings. Leave the beans whole, or cut in halves or thirds. Steam for 15 minutes (p. 3), or until almost tender. Spread on thin cloth on drier trays. Dry at a temperature not exceeding 155° F.

Beets.—Select young tender beets. Trim off tops and wash beets thoroughly. Steam 20 to 30 minutes (p. 3). Cool, peel, dice or cut into ¼-inch slices, and pile loosely on trays. Dry at a temperature not exceeding 150° F. Stir frequently; otherwise the slices will stick together.

Corn.—Any good table corn may be dried. Gather in milk stage, in amounts that can be prepared immediately for drying. Husk, remove any blemishes. Silking is not necessary. Steam for 10 minutes or hold in boiling water 8 to 12 minutes, or until the milk is set. Drain, cool, cut corn from cob. Spread on trays, $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch deep. Dry at 130° to 140° F. Stir during drying to separate grains.

Herbs, including celery leaves and parsley.—Gather when leaves are fully mature but usually before flowers develop. Leaves should be free from sand and other foreign matter. To preserve flavor and color hang stems over a wire and dry quickly in the shade, or tie in small bundles and hang in a dust-free room with good air circulation. When thoroughly dry, remove all coarse stems and store the leaves in glass jars with screw tops. Label, and keep in a cool, dry place.

Leafy green vegetables—beet tops, dandelion greens, kale, mustard greens, turnip greens.—Wash in several waters to remove grit. Trim off tough stems and discard. Steam the leaves 5 minutes, or until the stem is heated through. Pile loosely (not more than 1 inch deep) on thin cloth on trays. Dry at a temperature not exceeding 150° F.

Okra.—Select young tender pods. Cut in $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch slices. Steam 4 to 8 minutes. Place in thin layers on tray. Start drying at 125° F. and increase temperature to 140° .

Peas.—Steam 8 to 10 minutes, or hold in boiling water 3 to 4 minutes. Otherwise directions are same as for lima beans.

Peppers, paprika.—Paprika peppers dry readily in the air and are not subject to mold or spoilage. Wash, string with needles and cord and hang in a dry place, or spread on trays in single layers. Dry at room temperature for several weeks. Or the plants may be suspended in bunches, root side up, where the air can get to them.

Pimientos.—Wash, sort, and trim. Spread on trays in single layers. Start drying at 165° F. and finish at not above 150° .

Pumpkin.—Cut in strips 1 to 2 inches wide. Peel, remove seeds and pithy material, and cut in slices $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick. Steam or hold in boiling water 5 to 8 minutes. Spread on trays in single layers. Place in drier at 175° F. and finish drying at 160° .

Squash.—Directions same as for pumpkin.

Sweetpotatoes.—Wash thoroughly. Loosen skins by dipping in boiling lye solution composed of 5 ounces of commercial concentrated lye to 2 gallons of water. (Or steam until tender—15 to 45 minutes, depending on the size of the potatoes.) Cool under cold water, and peel off skins. Slice lengthwise about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick. Dip slices in citric acid solution just long enough to coat surfaces. The solution is made by dissolving 5 ounces of citric acid crystals in 2 gallons of water. Place slices on thin cloth on drier trays. Start drying at 135° to 150° F. The temperature should never exceed 160° to 165° . Sweetpotatoes should not be dried in a cabinet or swinging drier, but in a drier of the tunnel type with a forced draft.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Those who wish to learn more about drying fruits and vegetables at home may get further information from their own State agricultural experiment stations and extension services. The United States Department of Agriculture also publishes a comprehensive bulletin on the subject, Farmers' Bulletin 984, Farm and Home Drying of Fruits and Vegetables. Other bulletins on preservation of fruits and vegetables published by the United States Department of Agriculture are listed below:

- Home canning of fruits, vegetables, and meats. Farmers' Bul. 1762.
- Home storage of vegetables. Farmers' Bul. 879.
- Making fermented pickles. Farmers' Bul. 1438.
- Home-made jellies, jams, and preserves. Farmers' Bul. 1800.
- Making vinegar in the home and on the farm. Farmers' Bul. 1424.
- Community food preservation centers. Misc. Pub. 472.